

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

2 T 48
4
SCIENCE AND SENTIMENT IN RABIES CONTROL

A transcribed talk by Gove Hambridge, Coordinator of Research Publications, Agricultural Research Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Recorded July 18, 1945. Time: 5 minutes and 43 seconds, without announcer's parts.

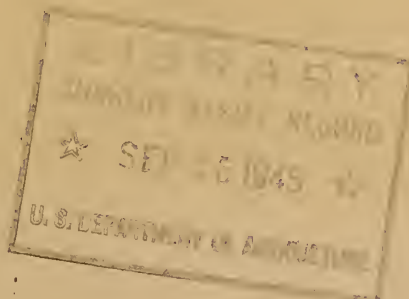
OPENING

ANNOUNCER (LIVE): Ever hear the cry MAD DOG! MAD DOG! ring out on a quiet suburban street? Well, if you have, you know that it chills clear to the bone. Dogs gone mad with rabies are plenty dangerous. And the disease affects many other valuable animals as well. Animal scientists have worked out a set of definite recommendations for rabies control. And Gove Hambridge of the Research Administration of the Department of Agriculture, by transcription, is going to tell us something about it. Mr. Hambridge.

CLOSING

ANNOUNCER (LIVE): You can count on my help Mr. Hambridge. Believe me, if I see a rabid dog, I'll either remove the dog...or myself, in a hurry. This talk by Gove Hambridge, of the Research Administration of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has been one of a series telling how Farm Science Serves the Nation.

###



SCIENCE AND SENTIMENT IN RABIES CONTROL

A transcribed talk by Gove Hambidge, Coordinator of Research Publications, Agricultural Research Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Recorded July 18, 1945. Time: 5 minutes and 43 seconds, without announcer's parts.

TRANSCRIPTION:

HAMBIDGE: I don't know how many of you have dogs, but whether you have or not, the subject of rabies, or hydrophobia, affects you anyway. It affects every one of us, because any of us might get bitten by a mad dog. It affects farmers particularly, because not only human beings but farm animals are subject to rabies. So today I want to have a frank talk about the problem and bring out some of the known facts. Recently I talked with Dr. Harry W. Schoening of the Department's Bureau of Animal Industry. Dr. Schoening is in charge of the Pathological Division, which studies rabies along with many other animal diseases. He's also the chairman of the rabies committee of a large national veterinary organization.

According to Dr. Schoening's latest figures on rabies for last year, in the entire country about 10,500 animals were known to be affected. Probably there were more than that, because it's very unlikely that all cases were reported. But we know there were at least 10,500. About 9,000 of these, all told, were dogs. Rabid cattle were next in number. Other animals frequently affected were cats, sheep, swine, horses, goats. And as we all know, human beings—children and men and women—continue to be common victims. Then, too, rabies sometimes gets into wild animals, including coyotes, foxes, squirrels, and even skunks.

So there is danger to man and livestock from many sources—but the greatest danger is from dogs. You'd expect this because of the many dogs affected by rabies and their tendency to bite when they get the disease; the virus is carried in their saliva.

Now how about protection from rabies? According to Dr. Schoening, muzzling dogs is some protection, but muzzling alone isn't enough because of the large number of unlicensed vagrant dogs that have no owners. The surest way to protect a dog from rabies is to keep it strictly away from other animals. Many people ask about vaccination as a protection. The use of rabies vaccine gives good protection, and it is advisable especially in places where the disease is quite prevalent. Vaccines have been improved a good deal in recent years and are therefore better than the older vaccine some people still have in mind when discussing vaccination against rabies. But Dr. Schoening and other authorities emphasize that vaccination, even with all its good points, is chiefly an aid that should be used along with other methods of prevention and control.

The rabies problem has become a national one, but most of the actual control work is in the hands of State and local officials. These officials license dogs, establish quarantines, and use other measures prescribed or authorized by law. But if laws and regulations are to be really effective, they must be backed up by the whole-hearted support of the public.

A committee of the United State Livestock Sanitary Association has given a great deal of study to rabies control and has worked out a definite program of sound procedures. This program is intended to help bring about greater uniformity in State and local regulations throughout the United States, and to concentrate attention on the most important things to do. The recommended measures deal only with the control of rabies in dogs, since dogs are the key to the problem. Here are the measures the U. S. Livestock Sanitary Association recommends. (I am putting the recommendations in my own words.) There are six points.

- (1) Rabid dogs should be properly disposed of, and definite diagnosis should be made in the case of dogs suspected of being rabid.
- (2) Dogs definitely known to have been bitten by a rabid dog should be destroyed, and dogs known to have been in contact with a rabid dog should be quarantined for at least 6 months or else destroyed.
- (3) All dogs should be licensed.
- (4) Stray dogs should be impounded and properly disposed of if they're not claimed.
- (5) Strict general quarantine measures should be applied over a sufficiently wide area.
- (6) Dogs should be vaccinated against rabies.

That, briefly, is a program that national authorities consider scientifically sound and otherwise practical. The point to be emphasized is that no single measure is enough in itself, but when combined they meet practically all the situations likely to arise.

The scientists say with confidence that we have all the knowledge necessary for eradicating rabies completely from the United States. Several other countries are entirely free of this disease and have been successful in maintaining that freedom. Our own Territory of Hawaii is among them. Other countries that have long been free of rabies are Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark, Norway. With this evidence that we can eliminate rabies, it is clear that measures to conquer this disease in the United States deserve active public support. All experience, both scientific and practical, shows that rabies is transmitted only by animals that are actually diseased at the time they inflict the bite. This means that most of the effort can and should be concentrated on finding and removing rabid animals. The sooner this is done the sooner will we see an end to the deaths that rabies cause, not to mention the untold suffering and the monetary loss. Rabies can be conquered, and your help is needed to hasten the day.